

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINSHA 08092 271440Z

65

ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 /027 W

----- 016673

R 271144Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9787

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 08092

FOR DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY EAGLEBURGER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASCH, CG

SUBJECT: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN KINSHASA AND EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

1. FOLLOWING UP ON CONVERSATIONS WHILE YOU WERE HERE LAST WEEK, I WOULD LIKE TO OUTLINE A PROBLEM WE HAVE HERE AND SEEK YOUR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE. IT CONCERNS THE QUESTION OF CHARTERING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN KINSHASA AND THE SERIOUS NEGATIVE EFFECT WHICH I BELIEVE SUCH A STEP WILL HAVE ON THE MORALE AND FUTURE STAFFING OF THIS POST IF, AS A CONSEQUENCE, EDUCATION ALLOWANCES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED.

2. KINSHASA'S SCHOOL ENCOMPASSES ALL GRADES -- KINDERGARTEN THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL -- AND HAS A TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF 477 STUDENTS OF WHOM ABOUT HALF ARE AMERICAN. BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS DEFICIENCIES THE HIGH SCHOOL HAS OVER THE YEARS BEEN JUDGED "INADEQUATE" BY THE DEPARTMENT, AND EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE ACCORDINGLY HAD THE OPTION OF USING AN AWAY-FROM-POST EDUCATION ALLOWANCE TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOLS WHERE STANDARDS ARE HIGHER. THIS OPTION HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING PERSONNEL FOR SERVICE IN KINSHASA AND IN MAINTAINING MORALE AT A POST WELL KNOWN FOR ITS DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS.

3. LAST YEAR THE SCHOOL, ENCOURAGED AND GUIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS (A/OS), UNDERTOOK TO GET ACCREDITED. SINCE IT COULD NOT AFFORD TO PAY FOR THE ACCREDITING PROCEDURE NORMALLY PERFORMED BY ONE OF THE MAJOR US EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AN ARRANGEMENT WAS WORKED OUT WHEREBY THE SCHOOL WOULD BE "CHARTERED" BY THE STATE OF OHIO IF IT COULD MEET THE STATE'S MINIMUM STANDARDS. THE DEPARTMENT APPARENTLY AGREED THAT,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINSHA 08092 271440Z

CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES, CHARTERING WOULD BE VIEWED AS

EQUIVALENT TO ACCREDITATION. LAST SPRING A TEAM OF THREE OHIO SCHOOL OFFICIALS SPENT SEVERAL DAYS HERE OBSERVING THE SCHOOL AND THEN WROTE A REPORT RECOMMENDING THE SCHOOL BE CHARTERED IF IT COULD REMEDY ONLY A HANDFUL OF THE NUMEROUS DEFICIENCIES THE TEAM IDENTIFIED. SCHOOL OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE OHIO WILL IN FACT CHARTER THE SCHOOL IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

4. THIS MATTER HAS ALREADY AROUSED CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY AMONG THE EMBASSY'S 150 AMERICAN EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES. PART OF THE PROBLEM RELATES TO THE WIDESPREAD FEELING THAT THE ACCREDITATION IS BEING ACHIEVED IN AN ABNORMAL, IRREGULAR WAY--- ON THE CHEAP, IF YOU WILL -- AND THAT THE SCHOOL REMAINS HIGHLY INADEQUATE IN MANY IMPORTANT AREAS. ALL AGREE THAT AT THE BEST THE SCHOOL MIGHT BARELY MATCH THE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOUND IN THE MOST RURAL AREAS OF OHIO; BUT THAT IT COMES NOWHERE NEAR THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION MOST OF US WOULD EXPECT FOR OUR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE WASHINGTON AREA.

5. WHAT MAKES THIS MATTER WORSE IS THAT CHARTERING, EVEN BY THIS UNORTHODOX PROCEDURE, WILL PROBABLY INDUCE THE DEPARTMENT TO ELIMINATE THE OPTION OF SENDING OUR CHILDREN AWAY TO SCHOOLS THAT TRULY ARE ADEQUATE. THIS, OF COURSE, IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE TRYING TO GET INTO DECENT COLLEGES. IF THIS ALLOWANCE IS TERMINATED I ANTICIPATE REAL PROBLEMS IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING THE KIND OF OFFICERS WE MUST HAVE TO STAFF THIS, OUR LARGEST MISSION IN AFRICA, JUST WHEN WE ARE ACCORDING HIGH PRIORITY AND GREATLY INCREASED RESOURCES TO OUR EXPANDING PROGRAMS HERE. IN A WORD, WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE IN ZAIRE IN TERMS OF THE SECRETARY'S STRATEGY FOR AFRICA, THIS IS JUST NO TIME TO BE TAKING BUREAUCRATIC STEPS WHICH WOULD MAKE OUR STAFFING PROBLEMS MORE DIFFICULT AND WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, WOULD SAVE THE DEPARTMENT VERY LITTLE IN TERMS OF ALLOWANCE EXPENDITURES. JUST TO GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE, THE CHIEF OF OUR MILITARY MISSION AND HIS WIFE, OUR BUDGET AND FISCAL OFFICER, HAVE TWO CHILDREN AWAY AT BOARDING SCHOOLS. OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS BEING GREATLY EXPANDED AND I CONSIDER IT MOST IMPORTANT THAT THIS HIGHLY-QUALIFIED OFFICER EXTEND HIS TOUR BY AT LEAST ANOTHER YEAR TO ASSURE SUCCESS OF OUR PROGRAM. IF, HOWEVER, THEIR SCHOOL ALLOWANCES ARE TERMINATED AND THEY ARE THEREFORE FACED WITH THE NECESSITY OF WITHDRAWING THEIR CHILDREN

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINSHA 08092 271440Z

FROM THEIR PRESENT SCHOOLS, IT IS QUESTIONABLE THAT THEY WILL AGREE TO STAY ON. MOREOVER, REPLACING OUR MILITARY MISSION CHIEF WITH THE FIRST-RATE OFFICER REQUIRED FOR THE POSITION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. OTHER KEY MEMBERS OF THIS -- INCLUDING MYSELF -- WILL FACE THE SAME PROBLEM, AND I CANNOT BLAME THEM IF THEY DECIDE THERE ARE ALREADY ENOUGH HARDSHIPS AT THIS DIFFICULT POST WITHOUT UNDERGOING YET ANOTHER WHICH STRIKES AT THE HEART OF RAISING A FAMILY ABROAD.

6. I WOULD NOT BOTHER YOU -- AND AT SUCH LENGTH -- IF I DID NOT REGARD THIS MATTER AS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THIS POST AND, ULTIMATELY, TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR POLICIES IN ZAIRE. WHILE I REALIZE THE CHARTERING/ACCREDITATION QUESTION PER SE MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT'S PURVIEW, CERTAINLY A WAY CAN AND SHOULD BE FOUND TO MAINTAIN KINSHASA'S AWAY-FROM-POST ALLOWANCE AND THEREBY AVOID DEPRIVING OUR PERSONNEL OF ONE OF THEIR MOST VALUED OPTIONS. AT A MINIMUM, FOR THOSE NOW AT POST WHO CAME HERE WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT SUCH AN ALLOWANCE WOULD BE AVAILABLE AND IN GOOD FAITH SENT THEIR CHILDREN AWAY TO SCHOOL, THE FULL ALLOWANCE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED FOR THE BALANCE OF THEIR TOUR. THE ALTERNATIVE OF HAVING TO PULL CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR PRESENT SCHOOLS IS UNFAIR AND POTENTIALLY VERY DAMAGING TO THE CHILDREN THEMSELVES.

7. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS ALLOWANCES IS: "TERMINATION OR SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION OF ANY OF THE MAJOR ALLOWANCES WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND/OR ON EMPLOYEE MORALE." THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN KINSHASA UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT GIVES US THE HELP REQUESTED ABOVE.
CUTLER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KINSHA08092
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760364-0291
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760917/aaaaaokg.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 JUL 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN KINSHASA AND EDUCATION ALLOWANCES
TAGS: ASCH, CG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006